

Tuesday, February 24, 1959

10:15 - The President telephoned to say he thought he would dash off a thank you note to Macmillan. CAH read press ticker on harsh statement by Khrushchev. The President said he didn't see how we square this up with their statement that they do not themselves want a major war; said he didn't see how they can go so far and still say they want peace instead of war. President said it really comes down to how firmly will our allies hang together in insisting on our rights. President referred to a West German editor who took his government to task on Berlin and reunification and said if the U.S. Govt believes Europeans will stand for a war over Berlin they are just crazy. CAH said this sentiment crops up and for instance in the case of Willie Brandt we had done everything to keep his statements in line with Adenauer's so there would not appear to be a rift in the German Government's position. CAH said this thing is still very fluid but it is significant that Khrushchev's statement was made at a political meeting in Moscow while Macmillan was still in Moscow. The President said he begins to wonder what we might do as steps now to show we are taking this very, very seriously and not ~~letting it go by default~~. President said we had sort of a schedule for ourselves but it may be we ought to think over very carefully with British, French and Germans what we are ready to do now; that if this is an ultimatum we better prepare for it. CAH said they will undoubtedly come back to a heads of government meeting. The President said as long as they are threatening war on one side and a heads of government meeting on the other, Khrushchev will get world opinion to feel we must have a meeting. President said he had hoped of course that Khrushchev might at least be a little less tough while Macmillan was in Moscow. (2) Discussed Secy Dulles' health.

2:20 - Telephoned the President and said he approved of the President's draft message to Macmillan with the exception of the third paragraph. Merchant agrees. He feels that, in view of uncertainty as to just what Khrushchev said, the third paragraph could come out without hurting the rest of it. The President said to send it on out without that paragraph.

2:25 - President telephoned. Said what he is trying to do is to let Macmillan know we appreciate his keeping us informed and to make observations concerning the situation so he will not be feeling alone and lost. Discussed Khrushchev statements a little further and confirmed 3rd paragraph can be deleted.

4:25 - Major Eisenhower telephoned. Said President has signed our February 17 memorandum on the establishment of a National Advisory Committee on Inter-American Affairs. The President approved it in principle. He does however want to be sure to have a chance to approve the list of people before any persons are approached, asked whether they might be available, etc. The President wants complete freedom of action in this connection. President has some doubt as to Members of Congress serving; that had been Milton's recommendation. (Informed JCalhoun and asked him to pass on word to Henderson, Hubottom and Dillon that the President wants opportunity approve list and no one should be approached prior to that.)